

Battle Ground Ecology Club makes its mark on the area

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The 46 members of the Battle Ground Elementary School Ecology Club have made their mark on the community by informing the public of the desirability of protecting the environment.

They have done so by painting messages at the 40 some storm drain openings at Battle Ground's street curbsides. They used spray cans and stencils to apply the message. The message is in two lines with an outline of a fish in between. The message:

"Dump No Waste. Drains To River."

Club members are students in the second, third, fourth and fifth grades. They gathered in the school yard at the end of the school day recently where Tippecanoe County Soil and Water Conservation District water quality educator Angie Tilton explained their task before they set out across town in groups of four and five to apply the stenciled messages.

The students wore orange vests to alert motorists of their presence along street curbs. Jolene Freeman, a Battle Ground teacher and club sponsor, and several mothers of the students, accompanied the children.

Freeman said club members hope to create community awareness of where rain water goes after flowing through the storm water drains and why it is important to keep the drains free of numerous kinds of debris and wastes.

The students learned the reasons from water quality educator Tilton. She told them that most such drains empty directly into creeks and rivers instead of waste water treatment plants, and that pollutants carried in the drains can kill aquatic life.

"Many items can pollute storm water, including such things as lawn clippings and leaves, pet waste, pesticides, fertilizers, paint, used motor oil, runoff from washing, cigarette butts and household cleaners," Tilton said.

"Polluted storm water damages our rivers, streams and lakes and threatens our drinking water supply."

Club member Kaleb Coutts got the message. When asked later why it is important to keep the drains free of pollutants, he answered:

"Because they might kill the fish."

And Eric Theller, another club member, said it's good to help keep fish alive. Why?

"It's good to have living things," Eric replied.



ECOLOGY CLUB MEMBER—Kaleb Coutts says he hopes would-be litter bugs heed the two-line stenciled message, "Dump No Waste. Drains To River." An outline of a fish is between the lines.



WATER QUALITY EDUCATOR—Angie Tilton instructs members of the Ecology Club on the use of spray paint as they prepare to paint signs at Battle Ground's storm water drain openings.



GETTING READY—Scott McConnell brushes debris away in preparation for the application of a stenciled message adjacent to a drain opening.

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